



SUMMARY

Virginia/North Carolina High Speed Rail Compact Meeting
Senate Room 1, Virginia State Capitol
Richmond, Virginia
January 7, 2014
10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Members in Attendance: Senator John Watkins (VA); Delegate Ron Villeneuve (VA) Delegate Jeion Ward (VA), Senator Kenneth Alexander (VA); Thelma Drake (Director of Rail), Representative Bill Brawley (NC), Paul Worley (NC Rail, Chief Deputy sec of NCDOT, ; Delegate Richard Anderson (VA); Delegate Ronald Villanueva (VA); Randolph Lickey (NC); Representative Nelson Dollar (NC) –Representative Bill Brawly (NC) – co chair; Senator Bill Rabon (NC); Senator Kathy Harrington (NC); Representative Nelson Dollar (NC)

Member(s) Absent: None

1. Opening Remarks

Compact Chair Senator Watkins welcomed the group to the first meeting of the Virginia North Carolina High Speed Rail Compact for 2014, and began member introductions. (See list above for a list of attendees.)

2. Safety Briefing - Delivered by Thelma Drake, Director, DRPT

3. Procedural Matters

- **Co-Chair Proposal** – Delegate Brawley introduced a motion that the Compact be led by Co-Chairs, one from each state, instead of continuing with the current single Chair position. The reason for this is to ensure good communication between the states. Virginia members support this proposition, and Compact Chair Senator Watkins seconded the motion, pending Compact legislation review to confirm that it would not preclude this arrangement. The Compact voted to allow a Co-Chair from each state. It was decided that any current Compact agreements potentially precluding this can be addressed at the next meeting.
- **Next Meeting** – Delegate Brawley proposed meeting more often than twice a year, the frequency stipulated in Compact legislation. Historically the Compact met in January in Richmond (beginning of the Virginia legislative session) and in July in Raleigh (end of the North Carolina legislative session). Delegate Brawley suggested that interim meetings could be held via video conference. It was decided that North Carolina should continue to plan for a face-to-face meeting in Raleigh in the July timeframe. In the

meantime, the delegations can coordinate to arrange an interim video conference, assuming that technical capabilities and public meeting regulations allow for this.

4. Virginia Update by Senator Watkins

- House Bill 2313, passed by the Virginia General Assembly last spring, provides a new dedicated revenue stream for both rail and transit in Virginia.
- Virginia was well poised to take over operations for intercity rail service as part of the requirement outlined in Section 209 of the federal Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA).
- Virginia expanded intercity rail service to Norfolk, which is operating successfully, along with other state-sponsored routes from Lynchburg and Richmond. Next, Amtrak Virginia will expand to Roanoke.
- Final design is underway for an 11-mile section of third track along the Southeast High Speed Rail (SEHSR) alignment in Northern Virginia, close to Quantico Marine Base. This project, known as Arkendale to Powell's Creek, is expected to be complete in 2017.
- Virginia and North Carolina are completing the Southeast High Speed Rail (SEHSR) Tier II Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Richmond to Raleigh segment. The SEHSR Tier II EIS for the Richmond Area to Potomac River segment (RAPS) is under procurement. Virginia received a Record of Decision (ROD) for the Tier I EIS from Richmond to Hampton Roads in December 2012.
- Virginia strengthened the responsibility of DRPT to include holding title to abandoned railways, which will allow for the purchase of CSX's abandoned S-line in the SEHSR corridor between Petersburg and Raleigh.
- Senator Watkins thanked CSX and Norfolk Southern for the railroads' partnership and contribution to the state transportation network.

5. North Carolina Update by Representative Brawley

- North Carolina continues to work with Virginia to complete the Richmond to Raleigh Tier II FEIS.
- North Carolina currently owns its own rail infrastructure, which is a unique situation from Virginia. There are many opportunities and increased control with ownership over rail infrastructure.
- North Carolina's priority is to get travelers into the Northeast Corridor (NEC), but North Carolina must work with Virginia to ensure adequate capacity along the congested RF&P corridor north of Richmond.

6. Federal Railroad Administration High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program Update

Corey Hill, Director of Rail Project Development and Delivery for the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) provided an overview of the federal rail program. Highlights are listed below.

- Funding and project administration metrics for the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grant, Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing (RRIF), and the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program (HSIPR).

- Feedback heard from other states and stakeholders and the actions FRA has taken to address these concerns.
- Illustration of the different corridors and regions prioritized for investment; NEC, California, Pacific Northwest, Chicago/Midwest, Texas and Florida were some of the major regions highlighted.

The following topics were discussed during the question/answer session following Mr. Hill's presentation:

- Passenger rail development in Florida, Georgia and Texas - different sources of funding and complications of each project.
- Methods to assess market demand such as population, distance, city pairings and lessons learned from European rail travel.
- FRA's balanced approach to investment; spreading investment to different areas of the country and different types of projects with different funding streams.
- Steps to establishing a nationwide rail plan and a comprehensive plan for the future.

7. Northeast Corridor – Importance of Coordination

Drew Galloway, Chief of Northeast Corridor Infrastructure, Planning and Performance for Amtrak, provided an overview of the NEC and its connectivity with SEHSR corridor development. Major highlights are listed below.

- Statistics for Amtrak's network, routes, ridership, operations and employment at the national level, for VA, NC and the NEC.
- Detailed description of service, population and characteristics of the NEC; a complex and growing corridor with significant economic output, multiple commuter operations and growing populations.
- Future NEC work includes spot improvements, station improvements, increased capacity, better coordination through the NEC commission and integrated higher speed for all operated services.
- Major projects for the NEC include the Gateway Program and multiple station upgrades in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, D.C.
- It is important to coordinate with SEHSR as it is the only high speed rail connection in the region; the southeast is a growing market, and both corridors will benefit from coordination.

The following topics were discussed during the question/answer session following Mr. Galloway's presentation:

- Ridership projection methodology and its relationship to infrastructure.
- Amtrak's relationship to ports and the freight industry.
- The potential for dual propulsion locomotives with the current infrastructure and Amtrak's current rolling stock, and the potential complications for higher speed services.

-- WORKING LUNCH WITH PRESENTATION 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. --

8. Procedural Matters Continued – Legislative Findings

Jason Powell, Legislative Analyst for the Virginia Senate Finance Committee, reported that Virginia/North Carolina High Speed Rail Compact legislation does not provide for dual Chairs. Since it is the intent of the Compact membership to operate with a Co-chair from each state, it was decided that for the time being, the Compact can operate with a Chair and Deputy Chair, with the understanding that the Deputy Chair can take on the responsibilities of a Co-chair. Virginia and North Carolina can work together to amend the legislation as appropriate.

9. Federal Funding Opportunities

David Ewing of the States for Passenger Rail Coalition provided an overview of existing and potential funding sources for developing the SEHSR corridor. Sources included:

- **TIGER, Surface Transportation Program (STP) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)** program, Section 130, Operation Lifesaver, state, and private funding.
- Suggested that federal assistance to support intercity rail is in the national interest.
- Multiple funding sources will be needed to carry out such a large project; different funding sources may be suited to different states.

The following topics were discussed during the question/answer session following Mr. Ewing's presentation:

- The potential mix of private and public funding to develop the S-Line.
- Potential for reauthorization of Map 21.
- Liability reform associated with PRIAA Section 209.

10. Aligning Virginia and North Carolina's Goals and Action Plan

- The priority for purchasing and developing the S-Line was discussed. Both Virginia and North Carolina are working with CSX to finalize the purchasing option.
- Virginia and North Carolina members discussed the relationship between capacity issues in Virginia between the Richmond area and Washington, D.C., and service development in North Carolina. The majority of the ridership market in the southeast is heading north to Washington, D.C. and beyond.
- Virginia and North Carolina members suggested the need for a joint effort to solve the congestion issues along the Richmond to Washington, D.C. corridor. In the meantime Virginia will continue to move forward with the SEHSR Tier II for RAPS, which also has a goal of expanding capacity in the corridor.
- Members indicated that corridor congestion is a national issue. As different areas of the southeast and northeast corridor develop, chokepoints will continue to paralyze the entire network. For example, Georgia has expressed desire for adding train service, but will need to work with North Carolina, just as North Carolina and Virginia must work together. Additionally, the Hudson River tunnel remains a chokepoint for the NEC.
- Members suggested that the corridor synthesis report for Richmond to Washington, D.C. be updated to reflect current capacity.

- A master schedule from Boston to Charlotte, covering the complete NEC and SEHSR corridor, would assist with assessing capacity needs and help understand impact of develop the SEHSR corridor with the rest of the rail network.

11. Closing remarks - Closing remarks included an introduction of staff, stakeholders and partners from the audience.

12. Meeting adjourned

Action Items:

- Working within the current guidelines of the Compact legislation, the Compact will be led jointly by the current Chair, Senator Watkins from Virginia, and current Deputy Chair Representative Brawley from North Carolina. Both the Chair and Deputy Chair will serve as a Co-Chairs, sharing responsibilities equally.
- Review Compact legislation to determine if changes to the legislation are needed to formalize this arrangement.
- Schedule the next face-to-face Compact meeting in North Carolina in the July timeframe.
- Explore the possibility of holding web meetings between full compact meetings.
- Finalize S-Line purchasing option with CSX.
- Update Synthesis Report.